



# I'll Tell Me Ma: A Childhood Memoir

*Brian Keenan*

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**The story of an ordinary boy growing up in Belfast who would go on to become world-famous as a hostage in Beirut, and author of the extraordinary testimony of imprisonment and survival that was *An Evil Cradling***

In this remarkable and equally moving act of retrieval, Brian Keenan has captured the vanished world of 1950s Belfast in all its vivid vernacular and grey, post-war austerity. This is a city where westerns were showing every afternoon at the Picture Theatre, where livestock was still herded onto the docks and the shipyards flourished. It was also a place of ghosts: the plague dead in the cemeteries, the family dead in the scrapbooks, a witch's box discovered under the stairs, the giant street bonfires every 12th of July to commemorate the Battle of the Boyne. By the end of the book, after his father's death and his mother's Alzheimer's, Belfast itself becomes a ghost city to Brian Keenan, the boy who leaves to become a man. Rich in detail and atmosphere, this is an affectionate story of a disaffected childhood. At the center is a shy, self-conscious boy of unusual moral integrity; a boy puzzled by religion and sectarianism, in love with books and music and full of curiosity about the world outside.

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